



CU 361 THE CULTURE OF TRAUMA
IES Abroad Vienna

DESCRIPTION:

The course examines the rise of trauma as a prominent cultural discourse for the representation of individual and collective injuries and catastrophic events in the 20th and 21st centuries. The course will follow the historical process through which trauma transformed from a specialized medical and psychoanalytical term into a household concept that permeates our culture. Students will become familiar with the cultural uses to which the early models of trauma have been put and with the major controversies surrounding them as trauma became a more general cultural concept, including debates about collective and inherited trauma, vicarious trauma, and repressed memories and the cultural impact of representing experiences of harm and disempowerment. Scholarly material on trauma will be juxtaposed with a selection of European and American narratives (literature, memoir, and film), exemplifying the challenges of representing, narrating and responding to trauma. This allows students to recognize and empathetically, yet critically respond to the cultural conventions that have developed in audio-visual representations of trauma. Students will also reflect on how a contemporary culture of trauma affects our own time in such practices, for instance, as the consumption of mediated suffering on television and the internet or the creation of “safe” environments in education.

CREDITS: 3 credits

CONTACT HOURS: 45 hours

LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION: English

PREREQUISITES: none

METHOD OF PRESENTATION: There will be 20, ninety-minute-long sessions. The course is composed of lectures, class discussions, written assignments, exams, and excursions to Mauthausen and Budapest.

REQUIRED WORK AND FORM OF ASSESSMENT:

- Class-participation - 10%
- Response papers - 25%
- Midterm - 30%
- Final Exam - 35%

Class-participation

- Oral component: class-discussion of specific topics on the basis of the compulsory readings (descriptive or theoretical pieces).
- Participation policy: Students differ in character and in their habits of communication and will be highly respected. No arbitrary ‘points’ for participation will be assigned. Class atmosphere will be encouraging and not competitive. However, not making an effort to contribute to the discussions at all, or simply skipping classes unexcused will result in lowering the final grade.

Response papers

Students are expected to write one short response a week (2-3 typewritten pages) either to a theoretical text or a narrative. Students are expected to go beyond summary or description and interpret, critique or reflect on the given work.

Midterm

The in-class midterm exam will consist of two parts: (1) explanation and interpretation of concepts and (2) one shorter essay on a major topic.



Final

The take-home final exam will be a longer, integrative essay addressing or extending one of the themes of the course. Emphasis will be on the development of the student's ideas shaping during the course as a whole.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

By the end of the course students will be able to:

- describe the psychoanalytical origins of trauma as a concept
- compare concepts of individual and collective trauma
- analyze conceptual schemas related to trauma, narration, and the body
- identify the major controversies in the history of trauma
- compare positions in the major controversies in the history of trauma
- identify differences between academic disciplines in the use of trauma as a concept
- classify and evaluate uses of the concept of trauma in social discourse
- analyze cultural differences in representing and responding to traumatic events
- analyze media practices of visually representing traumatic events

ATTENDANCE POLICY:

IES Vienna requires attendance at all class sessions, including field study excursions, internship meetings, scheduled rehearsals, and all tests and exams. Attendance will be taken for every class. If a student misses more than two classes without an excuse, the final grade will be reduced by one-third of a letter grade (for example, A- to B+) for every additional unexcused absence.

CONTENT:

Week	Content	Assignments/Readings
Week 1, Session 1	• Introduction • Getting acquainted and course introduction: some definitions of terms	• Ruth Leys, from "Freud and Trauma," in Trauma: A genealogy, Univ. of Chicago Press, 2000, 27-35.
Week 1, Session 2	• The Vienna and Budapest schools	• S. Freud, Inhibition, Symptoms, and Anxiety (1926), VIII-X 132- 156 Standard Edition, reprinted in Samuel Arbiser & Jorge Schneider eds., On Freud's "Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety", London: Karnac Books, 2013.
Week 2, Session 1	• The Vienna and Budapest Schools (continued) • 1st response paper due	• S. Freud, "Mourning and Melancholia," (1917) SE, reprinted in On Freud's "Mourning and Melancholia" edited by Leticia Glocer Fiorini, Thierry Bokanowski, Sergio Lewkowicz
Week 2, Session 2	• The Vienna and Budapest schools (continued)	• Sandor Ferenczi, "Two types of war neuroses" [1916/17], in Further Contributions to the Theory and Technique of Psychoanalysis, Karnac Books, 1994, 133-141.

Week 3, Session 1	- War 2nd response paper due	- Ruth Leys, "Traumatic Cures: Shell Shock, Janet, and the Question of Memory," <i>Trauma: A genealogy</i>, Univ. of Chicago Press, 2000, 93-119. - Jacques Tardi, <i>It Was the War of the Trenches</i>, trans. Kim Thompson. Fantagraphics, [1993] 2014. 1-20, 92-118.
Week 3, Session 2	War (continued)	<i>The Cabinet of Dr Caligari</i> (1920) d. Robert Wiene, 71 min. (viewed ahead of class) - Leys, from "Imitation Magic," <i>Trauma: A genealogy</i>, Univ. of Chicago Press, 2000, 124-138.
Week 4, Session 1	- War (continued) 3rd response paper due	- Art Spiegelman, <i>Maus: A Survivor's Tale: and Here My Troubles Began</i>. New York: Pantheon, 1986, 9-74. - Dominick LaCapra, "Holocaust Testimonies: Attending to the Victim's Voice," in <i>Writing History, Writing Trauma</i>, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001, 86-97.
Week 4, Session 2	War (continued)	- Art Spiegelman, <i>Maus</i> (continued). 75-135. - Melvin Konner, "Trauma, Adaptation, and Resilience: A Cross-Cultural and Evolutionary Perspective," in L. Kirmayer, R. Lemelson, and M. Barad (eds.), <i>Understanding Trauma: Integrating Biological, Clinical, and Cultural Perspectives</i>, University of California, Los Angeles, 300-315, 319-326.
Week 5, Session 1	- Family - Repressed memory debate	- Benjamin Wilkomirski, <i>Fragments: Memories of a Wartime Childhood</i>. New York: Schocken Books, 1996, 38-68. (A famous and famously perplexing case of fraud/delusion, this inauthentic memoir of an alleged child survivor of the Holocaust has been withdrawn by the publisher, but not the author.) - Felix Mendelssohn, "Transgenerational Transmission of Trauma: Guilt, Shame and the 'Heroic Dilemma'," <i>International Journal of Group Psychotherapy</i> 0020-7284 = Issn. 58.3 (2008): 389-396
Week 5, Session 2	Midterm Exam	<i>Capturing the Friedmans</i>, dir. Andrew Jarecki (2003). 104'. (viewed ahead of class) Richard J. McNally, "Theories of Repression and Dissociation", in <i>Remembering Trauma</i>,

		Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press, 2005. 166-170, 172-185.
Week 6, Session 1	- Family (continued) 4th response paper due	- Father [Apa] (1966). Dir. István Szabó. 86' (Set in postwar Budapest, a film about the challenge of self-knowledge and separating fantasy from reality in the wake of devastation.) (viewed ahead of class) - Vamik, D V. "Transgenerational Transmissions and Chosen Traumas: An Aspect of LargeGroup Identity." Group Analysis. 34.1 (2001): 79-97.
Week 6, Session 2	Family (continued)	Szilárd Borbély, The Dispossessed: A Novel, trans. Ottilie Mulzet, 2016. (excerpt, c. 80 pp.)
Week 7, Session 1	- Body 5th response paper due - Son of Saul, dir. L. Nemes Jeles. 117'. 2015. (Based on historical documents, a fictional story of a Hungarian member of the Sonderkommando, the group of Jewish prisoners assisting the Nazis in the extermination, who finds a boy he claims is his son.) (viewed in class, if possible – more than 90 mins.)	- Caruth, Cathy. Trauma and Experience. in Trauma: Explorations in Memory. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1996. 3-12. - Kolk, B.A. "The Body Keeps the Score: Memory and the Evolving Psychobiology of Posttraumatic Stress." Harvard Review of Psychiatry. 1.5 (1994): 258-262.
Week 7, Session 2	Body (continued)	White Palms. 2006. Dir. Szabolcs Hajdú. 101'. Awardwinning sports drama about idealized and failing bodies – individual and political -- that carry imprints of the past (state socialism). (viewed ahead of class)
Week 8, Session 1	- GEOGRAPHIES OF TRAUMA 6th response paper due! - The Danube Exodus, dir. Péter Forgács. 1998. 60'. (Award-winning found footage filmmaker's work about two boats carrying two fleeing groups along the Danube: first Slovakian and Austrian Jews fleeing to Palestine, then, on the return trip, repatriating Bessarabian Germans, fleeing to the Third Reich. Based on films made by the captain of one of the boats.) (viewed in class)	Ulrich Baer, "To Give Memory a Place: Contemporary Holocaust Photography and the Landscape Tradition," Spectral Evidence: The Photography of Trauma. Cambridge, Mass. [u.a.: MIT Press, 2005. 61-86.
Week 8, Session 2	Geographies of Trauma (continued)	Susannah Radstone, "Caché: Or what the past hides," Continuum: Journal of Media & Cultural Studies, 24:1 (2010), 17-29.

		Caché, dir. Michael Haneke, 2005. 118'. Western prosperity and its hidden pasts in a psychological thriller. (viewed ahead of class)
Week 9, Session 1	- Mediating Trauma 7th response paper due - Warsaw Uprising, 2014. 85'. (A film made with the latest technologies of colorization and audio reconstruction, based on archive footage commissioned by Bureau of Information and Propaganda of the Polish Home Army documenting the uprising for cinema newsreels) (excerpt of c. 30' viewed in class)	Janet Walker, "The Traumatic Paradox: Documentary Films, Historical Fictions, and Cataclysmic Past Events," <i>Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society</i> 22, no. 4 (Summer, 1997): 803-825. History and Memory: For Akiko and Takashige, dir. Rea Tajiri (1991). 31 mins. (On the experience of the director's family during the internment of Japanese-Americans during World War II) (viewed ahead of class)
Week 9, Session 2	- Dark Tourism - Austerlitz, dir. Sergei Loznica. 2016. 104' (excerpt of c. 30' viewed in class)	E. M. Robb, Violence and Recreation: Vacationing in the Realm of Dark Tourism. <i>Anthropology and Humanism</i>, 34 (2009): 51–60.
Week 10, Session 1	Mediating Trauma (continued)	Sensationalistic and voyeuristic media practices Ann Kaplan, "Vicarious Trauma and 'Empty' Empathy: Media Images of Rwanda and the Iraq War," in <i>Trauma Culture</i>, 87-100.
Week 10, Session 2	20th meeting: Review and summary Final Exam	

COURSE-RELATED TRIPS:

- Mandatory field trip to Mauthausen and mandatory weekend trip to Budapest along with AH341 and HS340 as part of the "History, Memory and Trauma" course cluster (date tba).

REQUIRED READINGS:

- Baer, Ulrich. "To Give Memory a Place: Contemporary Holocaust Photography and the Landscape Tradition." In *Spectral Evidence: The Photography of Trauma*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2005. 61-86.
- Caruth, Cathy. *Trauma and Experience*. in *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1996. 3-12.
- Ferenczi, Sandor. "Two types of war neuroses" [1916/17], in *Further Contributions to the Theory and Technique of Psychoanalysis*, Karnac Books, 1994, 124-141.
- Freud, Sigmund. "Mourning and Melancholia," (1917) SE, reprinted in *On Freud's "Mourning and Melancholia"* edited by Leticia Glocer Fiorini, Thierry Bokanowski, Sergio Lewkowicz.
- Freud, Sigmund. *Inhibition, Symptoms, and Anxiety* (1926), VIII-X 132-156 Standard Edition, reprinted in Samuel Arbiser & Jorge Schneider eds., *On Freud's "Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety"*, London: Karnac Books, 2013.
- Kaplan, Ann E. "Vicarious Trauma and 'Empty' Empathy: Media Images of Rwanda and the Iraq War." In *Trauma Culture*, 87-100.
- Kolk, B.A. "The Body Keeps the Score: Memory and the Evolving Psychobiology of Posttraumatic Stress." *Harvard Review of Psychiatry*. 1.5 (1994): 253-265.

- Konner, Melvin. "Trauma, Adaptation, and Resilience: A Cross-Cultural and Evolutionary Perspective." In L. Kirmayer, R. Lemelson, and M. Barad (eds.), *Understanding Trauma: Integrating Biological, Clinical, and Cultural Perspectives*, University of California, Los Angeles, 300-338.
- LaCapra, Dominick. "Holocaust Testimonies: Attending to the Victim's Voice." In *Writing History, Writing Trauma*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001, 86-123.
- Leys, Ruth. "Imitation Magic." In *Trauma: A genealogy*, Univ. of Chicago Press, 2000, 124-138.
- Leys, Ruth. "Freud and Trauma." In *Trauma: A genealogy*, Univ. of Chicago Press, 2000, 27-40.
- Leys, Ruth. "Traumatic Cures: Shell Shock, Janet, and the Question of Memory." In *Trauma: A genealogy*, Univ. of Chicago Press, 2000, 83-119.
- McNally, Richard J. "Theories of Repression and Dissociation." In *Remembering Trauma*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press, 2005. 159-185.
- Mendelssohn, Felix. "Transgenerational Transmission of Trauma: Guilt, Shame and the 'Heroic Dilemma'," *International Journal of Group Psychotherapy* 0020-7284 = Issn. 58.3 (2008): 389- 401.
- Radstone, Susannah. "Caché: Or what the past hides," *Continuum: Journal of Media & Cultural Studies*, 24:1 (2010), 17-29.
- Robb, E. M. "Violence and Recreation: Vacationing in the Realm of Dark Tourism." *Anthropology and Humanism*, 34 (2009): 51-60.
- Schacter, D. L. (Ed.). *Memory distortion: How minds, brains and societies reconstruct the past*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995.
- Spiegelman, Art. *Maus: A Survivor's Tale: and Here My Troubles Began*. New York: Pantheon, 1986.
- Szilárd Borbély, *The Dispossessed: A Novel*, trans. Otilie Mulzet, 2016. 288 pp. (excerpt)
- Tardi, Jacques. *It Was the War of the Trenches*, trans. Kim Thompson. Fantagraphics, [1993] 2014. 47- 118.
- Vamik, D V. "Transgenerational Transmissions and Chosen Traumas: an Aspect of Large-Group Identity." *Group Analysis*. 34.1 (2001): 79-97.
- Walker, Janet. "The Traumatic Paradox: Documentary Films, Historical Fictions, and Cataclysmic Past Events," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 22, no. 4 (Summer, 1997): 803-825.
- Wilkomirski, Benjamin. *Fragments: Memories of a Wartime Childhood*. New York: Schocken Books, 1996. 38-68.

Filmography

- *The Cabinet of Dr Caligari*. Dir. Robert Wiene. 1920.
- *Father [Apa]*. Dir. István Szabó. 1966.
- *History and Memory: For Akiko and Takashige*. Dir. Rea Tajiri. 1991.
- *The Danube Exodus*. Dir. Péter Forgács. 1998.
- *Capturing the Friedmans*. Dir. Andrew Jarecki. 2003.
- *Caché*. Dir. Michael Haneke. 2005.
- *White Palms [Fehér tenyér]*. Dir. Szabolcs Hajdú. 2006.
- *Warsaw Uprising [Powstanie Warszawskie]*. Dir. Jan Komasa. 2014.
- *Son of Saul [Saul fia]*. Dir. László Nemes Jeles. 2015.
- *Austerlitz*. Dir. Sergei Loznica. 2016.

RECOMMENDED READINGS:

- Alexander, J. C., Eyerman, R., Giesen, B., Smelser, N. J., & Sztompka, P. *Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004.
- Mark E. Bouton and Jaylyn Waddell, "Some Biobehavioral Insights into Persistent Effects of Emotional Trauma." In L. Kirmayer, R. Lemelson, and M. Barad (eds.), *Understanding Trauma: Integrating Biological, Clinical, and Cultural Perspectives*, University of California, Los Angeles, 41-77.
- Buelens, Gert, Sam Durrant, and Robert Eaglestone. *The Future of Trauma Theory: Contemporary Literary and Cultural Criticism*. London: Routledge, 2014.
- Caruth, Cathy. *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History*. Twentieth anniversary edition. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 2016.
- Connerton, Paul. *How Societies Remember*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989.
- Craps, Stef. *Postcolonial Witnessing: Trauma Out of Bounds*. New York: Palgrave, 2015.

- Felman, Shoshana, and Dori Laub. *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History*. New York: Routledge, 1992.
- Greenberg, Judith, ed. *Trauma at Home: After 9/11*. Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2003.
- Greenspan, Henry, Sara R. Horowitz, Éva Kovács, Berel Lang, Dori Laub, Kenneth Waltzer & Annette Wieviorka. "Engaging Survivors: Assessing 'Testimony' and 'Trauma' as Foundational Concepts," *Dapim: Studies on the Holocaust*, 28:3 (2014), 190-226.
- Herman, Judith. *Trauma and Recovery: The Aftermath of Violence— From Domestic Abuse to Political Terror*. New York: Basic Books, [1992] 2015.
- Kaplan, Ann E. *Trauma Culture : The Politics of Terror and Loss in Media and Literature*. New Brunswick: Rutgers UP, 2005.
- Kirmayer, L., R. Lemelson, and M. Barad (eds.), *Understanding Trauma: Integrating Biological, Clinical, and Cultural Perspectives*, Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2007
- LaCapra, Dominick. *Writing History, Writing Trauma*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001.
- Leys, Ruth. *Trauma: A genealogy*, Univ. of Chicago Press, 2000.
- Mächler, Stefan, and Benjamin Wilkomirski. *The Wilkomirski Affair: A Study in Biographical Truth*. New York: Schocken Books, 2001.
- McNally, R. J. *Remembering Trauma*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, Harvard University Press, 2003.
- Micale Mark S. and Paul Lerner, eds. *Traumatic Pasts: History, Psychiatry, and Trauma in the Modern Age*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2001.
- Pollock, Griselda. "Aesthetic Wit(h)nessing in the Era of Trauma," *EURAMERICA*, 40(4), 2010, 829–88.
- Radstone, Susannah and K. Hodgkin (eds.). *Regimes of Memory*. London: Routledge, 2003.
- Radstone, Susannah. "Trauma Theory: Contexts, Politics, Ethics." *Paragraph* 30:1 (2007) 9–29.